



File Code: 1950

Date: April 6, 2016

To Whom it may Concern:

The Ouachita National Forest, Poteau-Cold Springs Ranger District, has completed an environmental assessment (dated 04/01/2016) for the West Haw Ecological Management Unit project under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Management actions are needed to move the project area towards the design criteria for Management Area 21 (Old Growth Restoration) and Management Areas 22 (Renewal of the Shortleaf Pine-Bluestem Grass Ecosystem and Red-cockaded Woodpecker Habitat) in the Revised Forest Plan (*USDA Forest Service. 2005a.*).

West Haw Creek project area is located in Township 2 North, Range 32 West, Sections 19-22, 27-30, 31-32; T1N, R32W, S5-6; T2N, R33W, S24-25, 36; and T1N R33W S1. This project area is in Scott County, Arkansas on the Oklahoma-Arkansas border and is also approximately 4 miles north of the Scott-Polk County lines. Black Fork Wilderness is about 5 miles south of this project area. Walker Mountain lies to the northeast.

The proposed project is an activity implementing a land management plan and is subject to the pre-decisional objection process at 36 CFR 218 Subparts A and B. The draft EA and supporting documentation is available on-line at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=47489>. Documentation is also available for review at the Poteau-Cold Springs district office in Booneville, AR.

The opportunity to comment ends 30 days following the date of publication of the legal notice in the *Arkansas Democrat Gazette*. Only those who submit timely and specific written comments per §218.2 regarding the proposed project or activity during a public comment period established by the responsible official are eligible to file an objection §218.24(b)(6). For issues to be raised in objections, they must be based on previously submitted specific written comments regarding the proposed project or activity and attributed to the objector. The publication date of the legal notice in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the time to submit written comments on a proposed project or activity. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended. It is the responsibility of all individuals and organizations to ensure that their comments are received in a timely manner.

Written comments must be submitted to: AJ Brigrance, District Ranger, 2190 East Main, PO 417, Booneville, AR 72927, fax 479-675-3232. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:00 am to 3:30 pm Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc, .docx) to comments-southern-ouachita-coldsprings@fs.fed.us. For objection eligibility, each individual or representative from each entity submitting timely and specific written comments regarding the proposed project or activity must either sign the comments or verify identity upon request per §218.24(b)(8). Please state "West Haw Project" in the subject line when providing electronic comments, or on the envelope when replying by mail.



After considering your comments, the Forest Service will finalize the environmental assessment. An objection period will be provided on the *final* EA and *draft* Decision Notice/Finding of No Significant Impact. For additional information or hard copies of this project, call Donna Reagan, 479-675-4743 ext. 107 or email dreagan@fs.fed.us.

Sincerely,

/s/ *AJ Brigance*

AJ BRIGANCE
District Ranger